DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 177 688 EA 012 179

AUTHOR Knapp, Herbert; Jones, Richard M.
TITLE National Report on School Closing Survey. The Impact on Purchasing Departments.
PUB DATE 17 Oct 79
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of School Business Officials (65th, Denver, Colorado, October 14-18, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Charts; *Declining Enrollment; Elementary Secondary Education; *National Surveys; *Purchasing; *School Closing

ABSTRACT

This paper is a brief report on the impact of school closings on purchasing departments. It opens with a discussion of the trend of declining enrollments in public schools nationwide. The paper notes, however, that demographers expect the total number of children to begin to rise slightly in the mid-80's. Closing schools now is not the answer, it says, but joint use of vacant school buildings may be an acceptable alternative. The paper says school purchasing departments are in a dilemma when funds are short to buy new furniture while at the same time the district needs to dispose of old, unused furniture and equipment. It points out the need to reduce budget spending and learn to operate the schools more efficiently. Disposing of property is only one of the ways. (LD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

EA012 179

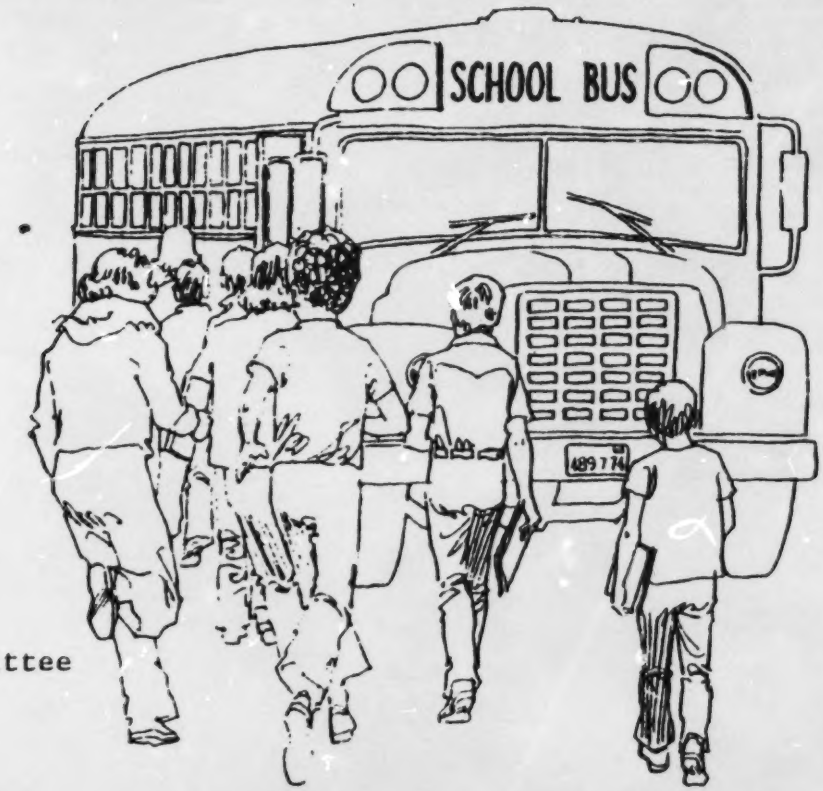
ED177688

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

NATIONAL REPORT ON SCHOOL CLOSING SURVEY

The Impact on Purchasing Departments



"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H. Knapp

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Herbert Knapp, R.S.B.O.
Chairman
Purchasing and Supply
Management Research Committee

Richard M. Jones
Vice-Chairman

Wednesday
October 17, 1979
12:30 - 1:30 p. m.

National Report on School Closing Survey

"The Impact on Purchasing Departments"

I. Introduction

What has happened to our public school enrollment?

Researchers say that currently in half - other researchers say three-fourth of the nation's school systems show a declining enrollment. The effects are felt most in larger cities, where there are typically more buildings with surplus space and more social and economic divisions among residents.

Ten years ago it was taken for granted that childless couples had fertility problems. No longer, now there is a growing awareness that some couples have just not decided to become parents. A survey by the Census Bureau in 1967 showed that 1.3 percent of married women who were 18-25 years old said they didn't expect to have children. By 1977 the figure had risen to 5.3 percent. In 1978, the Bureau reported that 11 percent of the women whose ages ranged from 18-34 did not expect to have children. The average couple now has 1.8 children, the lowest figure in a century. Probably the most important reason the question of optional parenthood arose was the Women's Liberation Movement. A woman's identity use to be a combination of her roll as wife and mother. Her first job, as defined by society, was to get married. She was granted tenure by conceiving. Women's Lib changed that; women could define themselves in additional ways. Now they have full time jobs. There was confusion. Husbands were asked to share in the child rearing responsibilities. There was more confusion. Not surprisingly, some independent thinkers began questioning parenthood; the National Alliance for Optional Parenthood evolved from their answers. Carole Baker, Executive Director of NAOP states: "We're not in the business to tell people not to have children, but only to publicize that people have an option."

The decision to have children or not to have children is a difficult one --- even after society and technology have made the option somewhat easier. It is work to raise a child. Like most things that take time, the rewards can be great. In the case of children they can be immeasurable. And, as one long time pediatrician says: "If young people knew how difficult it was to bring up children, they probaby would not have them. Thank goodness they don't know."

How much could it really cost to raise a child? The U.S. Department of Agriculture says that, in major cities, it cost $58,888.00 to raise a child from birth to age 18. That figure includes food, clothing, housing, medical care, education, transportation and "all other." The "all other" includes "personal care, recreation, reading and other miscellaneous expenditures." In government figures that come to $375 a year, or $7.25 a week. Now you could take your child to a ball game

or maybe to a movie with that $7.25. But don't you think you deserve a little more time with your spouse each week? That $7.25 will only buy you about 3½ hours of baby-sitting time.

II. What is the national trend?

In 1970 there were 51.3 million public school pupils in the United States. By 1983, enrollments are expected to bottom out nationally at 13 percent fewer. (44,500,000). By 1975, eighteen (18) of the twenty-seven (27) school districts that are members of the Council of the Great City Schools, a consortium of metropolitan area school systems that includes Baltimore's, already had dropped 13 percent and was still dropping.

Maryland is one of those states for which National Education Association research predicts a "most severe" decline in pupil populations. Statewide the change between 1971 and 1977 enrollment is said to be 7.9 percent, but the four largest school systems, Baltimore City, Baltimore, Montgomery and Prince Georges counties have recorded enrollment declines of 3 or 4 percent each year.

Nationwide, demographers expect the total number of children to begin a slight upswing in the mid-1980's and return to the level of the early 1960's. About 45 million - but to remain too small to occupy all of the building space available in most school systems. This glut of school space results from post World War II and the Korean War baby booms that caused school enrollment to mushroom and caused school systems to embark on a flurry of building to accommodate that growth. In addition, the 1960's were years of educational innovation, and new teaching concepts were incorporated into new buildings.

The reduced birth rate, combined with the uncertainty over economic conditions, increased numbers of working and professional women, rising incident of unmarried couples living together and the continued move of Americans from core cities to suburbia, all serve to reduce this pupil population, and all affect the large cities most severely.

III. Alternates to closing a school building.

Closing a building is less expensive than operating it with less than a full compliment of pupils. Otherwise, falling pupil population can increase the cost of education, to the disappointment of taxpayers who expect savings. But few neighborhoods willingly give up their familiar schools, and closing plans can pit communities, races and social classes against one another in an attempt to save what each often claims is the best school in the system --- its' own neighborhood school.

The second most attractive response is to reduce class sizes as the total enrollment drops. That alternative typically has the support of parents and teachers, but is costly and politically difficult at a time of public demand for lower taxes. School administrators are beginning to discuss and study the concept of joint use - allowing an acceptable tenant, such as a Senior Citizen Center or neighborhood library to use or rent vacant school building space. But the idea has yet to win widespread acceptance because of what administrators perceive to be insurmountable logistical problems. An article by Dr. Frederickson, School Facilities Consultant, Middletown, Wisconsin, entitled "Must Declining Enrollment Mean School Closing?" Advocated eight steps that school systems could use as guidelines in developing a master plan. In yet another article, Gregg W. Downey, Managing Editor of the Executive Educator, wrote an article: When Everybody Screams "Don't Close Our Schools" - Maybe you should listen. His proposal is to find compatible, but profit-making enterprises and to rent the space in the school facilities that can't be used. The best example is The DeWitt Mall, once a junior high school in Ithaca, New York. Classrooms have become apartments, offices and retail stores. Other illustrations: Arlington, Va. - surplus school has become a museum, Orlando, Fla. - a school was made into a hotel, in Pittsburgh - a school was reincarnated as a hospital, Peoria, Ill. - a school was converted into a bakery.

Yet another alternative took place in 1975-76 in Eugene, Oregon, a task force conducted a survey of all aspects related to underused schools. The object was to compare the benefits of continuing to provide classes in "half-empty" school buildings with the possible consequence and economies of closure. Although nine (9) of Eugene's thirty-one (31) elementary schools were operating at less than 75 percent capacity, the task force recommended closing none. It was clear to the task force that closing of any school would seriously disrupt the texture of neighborhood life. They contend that a neighborhood school accessible on foot serves as a vital center for community activities. The body concluded that the financial savings of closure did not outweigh the effects of vandalism on a vacant building. the loss of community focal point and the possibility that children might learn better in a less crowded environment.

---

1. American School & University, June, 1978, pp. 60-61
2. The Executive Educator, April, 1979, pp. 20-21-22

Similiar decisions have been made elsewhere. Seattle, Minneapolis, Huntville, Alabama and Montgomery County in Maryland, have minimized or delayed closings because of the possible disruptive effects on the community. Roosevelt High School in Dayton, Ohio - a massive structure with six floors and two swimming pools - is one example of what school systems can do with surplus space. At one time the fifty (50) year old structure served 3700 pupils. But it was closed in 1974 when it dropped to below 1000. Today the building serves 1800 clients a day, in nine separate programs ranging from Adult Basic Education to Cable Television Technology and Undergraduate College Courses.

Long range planning, community, citizen and parent involvement is critical to handling of pupil decline. School administrators admittedly are ill-equipped to come up with solutions to problems such as these because:

Their training and experience have been in responding to growth.

The problems of enrollment decline are not easily explained to the public.

The cost of education is rising as pupil confidence in its methods is failing.

No national information has been generated to determine the best method of dealing with enrollment decline.

School planners, many of whom were late in seeing the decline coming, now have trouble convincing a skeptical, and even angry, public that their projections of continued decline are valid.

In almost all cases, the first school closings are the most difficult for school board and administrators to justify publicly. The recurring problem comes down to one of setting priorities.

IV. What is the impact on Purchasing Departments?

There appears to be three major areas of concern and perhaps many more which will effect the purchasing operations.

First - The budget will be reduced in the areas of personnel, supplies, textbooks, furniture, equipment and services. Since there are fewer students, less money will be allotted for instructional materials. Also reductions in staff will occur whereby the greatest savings can be realized in the area of salaries. Services to equipment will be reduced as again labor costs have increased for the repairs of equipment in such areas as: Business Education, Vocational, Science, Phy. Ed., Music, etc. Maintenance to buildings

will be curtailed again because of the high cost of contractural work and budget cuts in this area of operation.

Second - The Purchasing Department will be called on to increase its' efficiency and stretch its' dollar even further. How can this be done? Most school systems have usually prided themselves in providing quality furniture and equipment. Now comes the time to revise our specifications and tighten our belts. The top of the line may have to be sacrificed for a product that will just do the job. How will change be accepted by teachers? Students? Parents? Administrators have all been IBM and Xerox oriented. The price of a dual-pitch, self correcting typewriter rose $50.00 on the East coast effective October 1, 1979. Delivery was quoted at about sixteen (16) weeks. Can educational institutions continue to pay the Cadillac price and be at the mercy of the vendor as to their delivery schedule? A September article in the Wall Street Journal describes the plight of a growing small office equipment concern. In 1979 the Columbus, Ohio based company appeared to have a rosy future with prior sales of more than 2 million. This year the financially strapped Columbus School System, with a declining enrollment slashed purchases 50%. The president of the equipment company had his shelves full based on last years sales, and finds he is "severly overstocked." This situation points to the problem many small businesses are facing as a result of belt-tightening and declining enrollment in America's public schools. School purchasing departments are spending less money on copyright materials. National companies that cater to both large and small school systems are being affected. Textbook publishers, for example, have already noticed a sales drop in some areas and are "very concerned," said Mark Kass, Director of Administration and Planning for the School Department of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, a subsidary of C.B.S. Inc. Mr. Kass said the use of supplementary paperbacks and workbooks is declining because schools are cutting costs by relying on only one textbook a course. In addition, those textbooks are being used for longer periods of time. "The problem with books is that they last too long," Mr. Kass grumbles. Another area that is suffering in sales is audio-visual equipment. Mid-Atlantic Audio-Visual, Inc. is "doing about 10% as much business with the school system as we would do normally," says Charles Wermer, President. Mr Wermer plans to increase emphasis on marketing in the private sector "Where there's more acceptance of technology." These are but a few of the areas that are targets for reduced expenditure and areas where the school purchasing department usually had fat but now find conditions lean.

Third - The changing role of the Purchasing Department. This concerns itself with the responsiblity for property disposal. Previously the sale of school buses might have been the big event of the year insofar as sales. Now it might be the sale or rental

of real estate, buildings, mobile classrooms right on down to kindergarten blocks. Fewer students has meant more furniture and equipment. As an illustration I will refer to the school closing that occurred in the Baltimore County Public Schools during the summer of 1979. Instead of developing plans to open three (3) or four (4) new schools, a task force formulated an operation plan to close seven (7) elementary and one (1) junior high school. Teachers who may have worked on summer furniture refinishing crews were converted into movers. Detailed priorities were established identifying materials to be moved out the last weeks of school, then what is to follow each day thereafter in order to remove security items that are subject to vandalism. Detailed forms had been printed, labels purchased, thousands of extra cartons, twine, masking tape and magic markers purchased. Closing schools were designated as "sending schools." Those getting additional pupils, furniture, equipment and supplies were called "receiving schools." One or two closing schools must serve as "Depositories" as the existing warehouse must continueto receive and distribute materials to the rest of the system. For two and a half months the transfer and sifting process continues. Schools open again after Labor Day and the job of review by departments continues. At the end of September a cut-off date is established and the doors are closed. What is left is the responsibility of the purchasing department to dispose of. Mainly it consists of maps, globes and charts; library books and textbooks; science supplies; and several thousand pieces of classroom student furniture. The Board Policy and Procedure Manual permits establishing a fair and reasonable price on surplus material. This sale has been an on-going process during the summer since the public as well as private and parochial schools had been aware of the school closings. These small sales have reduced the quantity by approximately 15-18%. Now comes the big challenge: to auction or put out for bid? What have you done in your school district? What would you recommend to your superintendent if this is the first time around for your school system? Today the purchasing department is in a dilemma. The funds are short to buy replacement or new furniture and equipment, and it ends up with a whole Depository of old furniture and material where no easy solution is apparent to resolve the problem. The new role of the purchasing director is one who most be creative, ingenious, imaginative, a super salesman and somewhat of a magician.

MARRIED WOMEN

NOT EXPECTED TO HAVE CHILDREN

1978 11%

1977 5.3%

1967 1.3%

Age group 18-25 18-25 18-34

1979

lowest figure in a century

12

T - 2

Average couple

1.8

children

13

1970

51,309,000

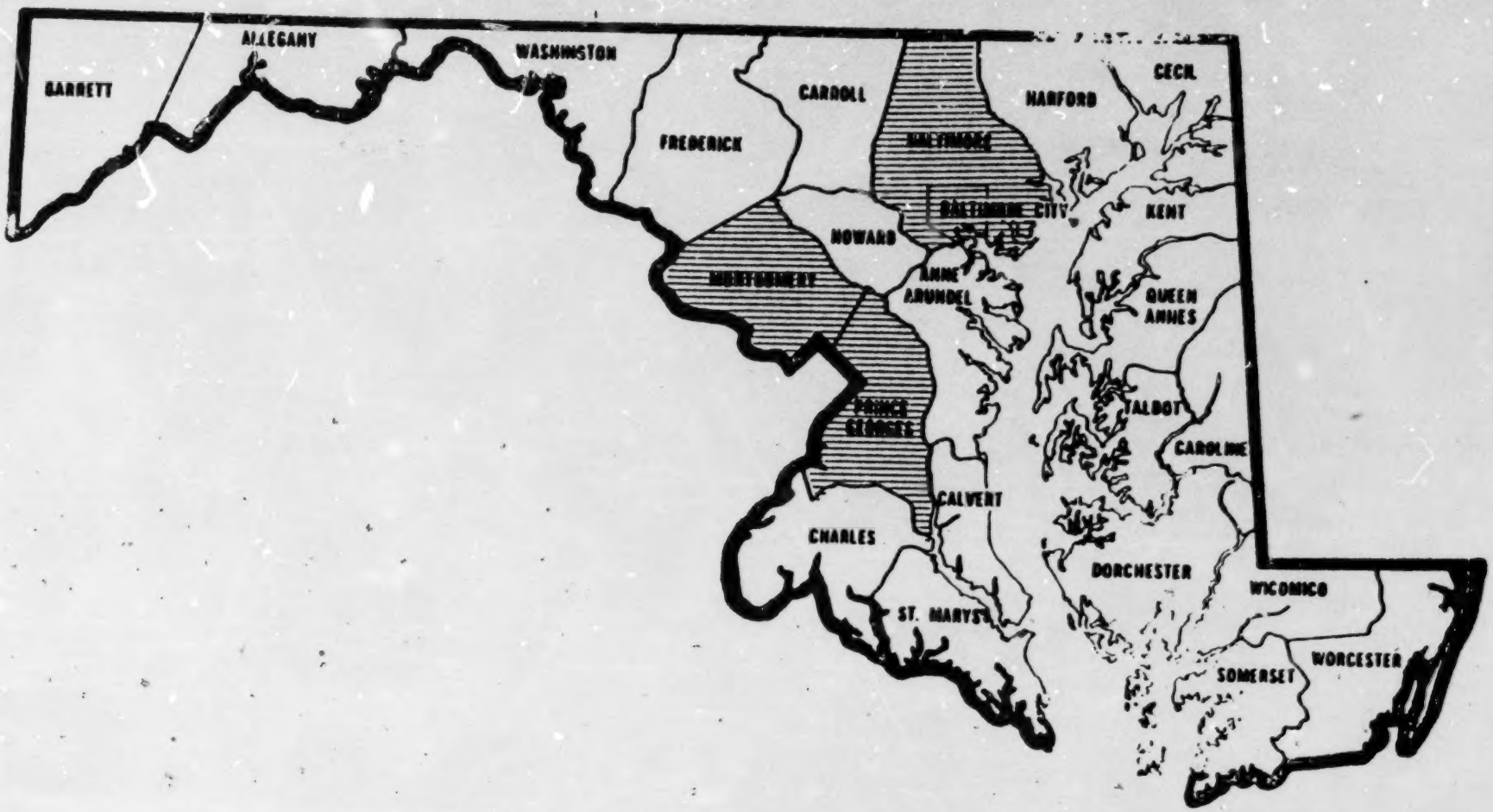
1979

46,200,000

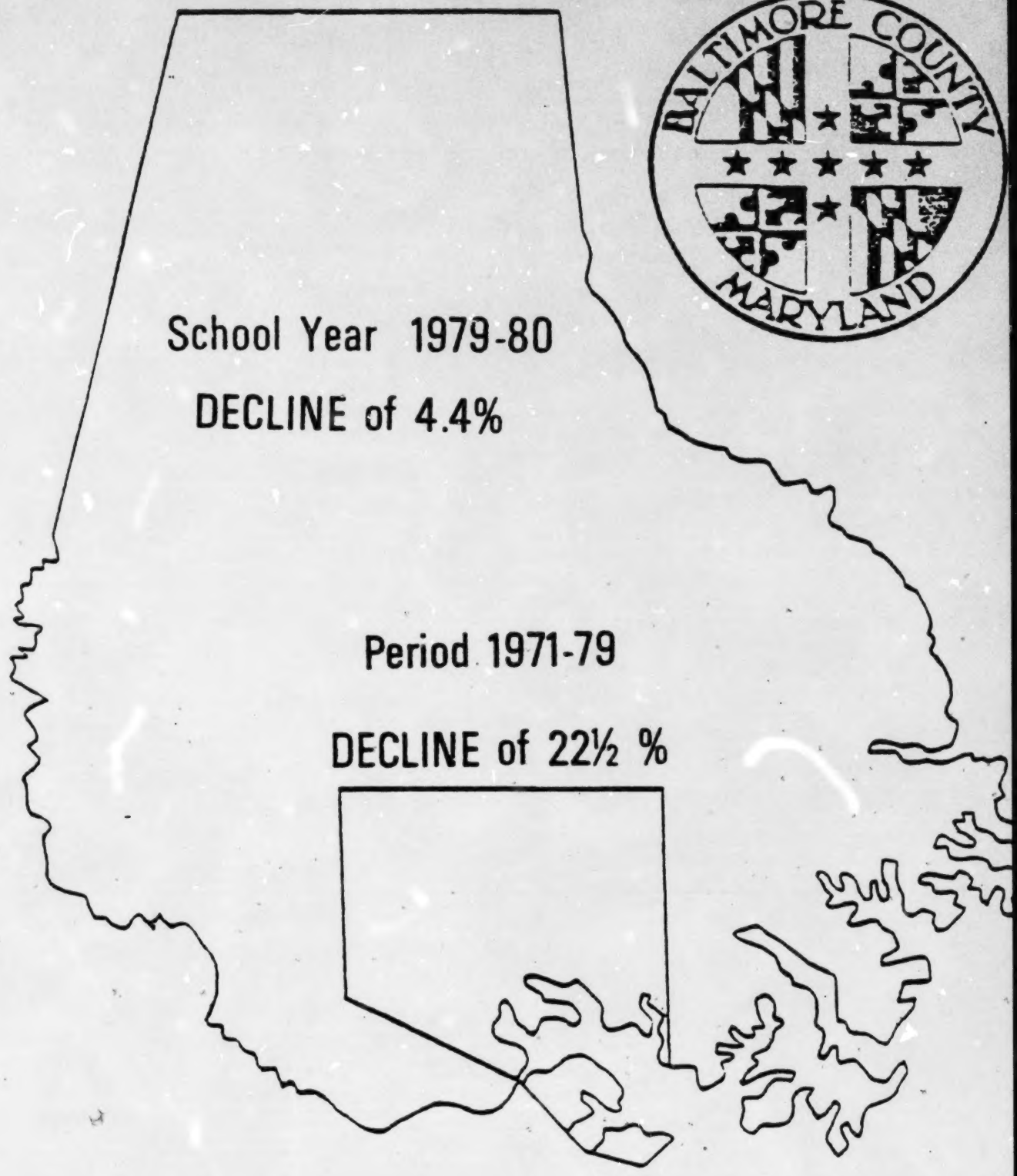
44,500,000

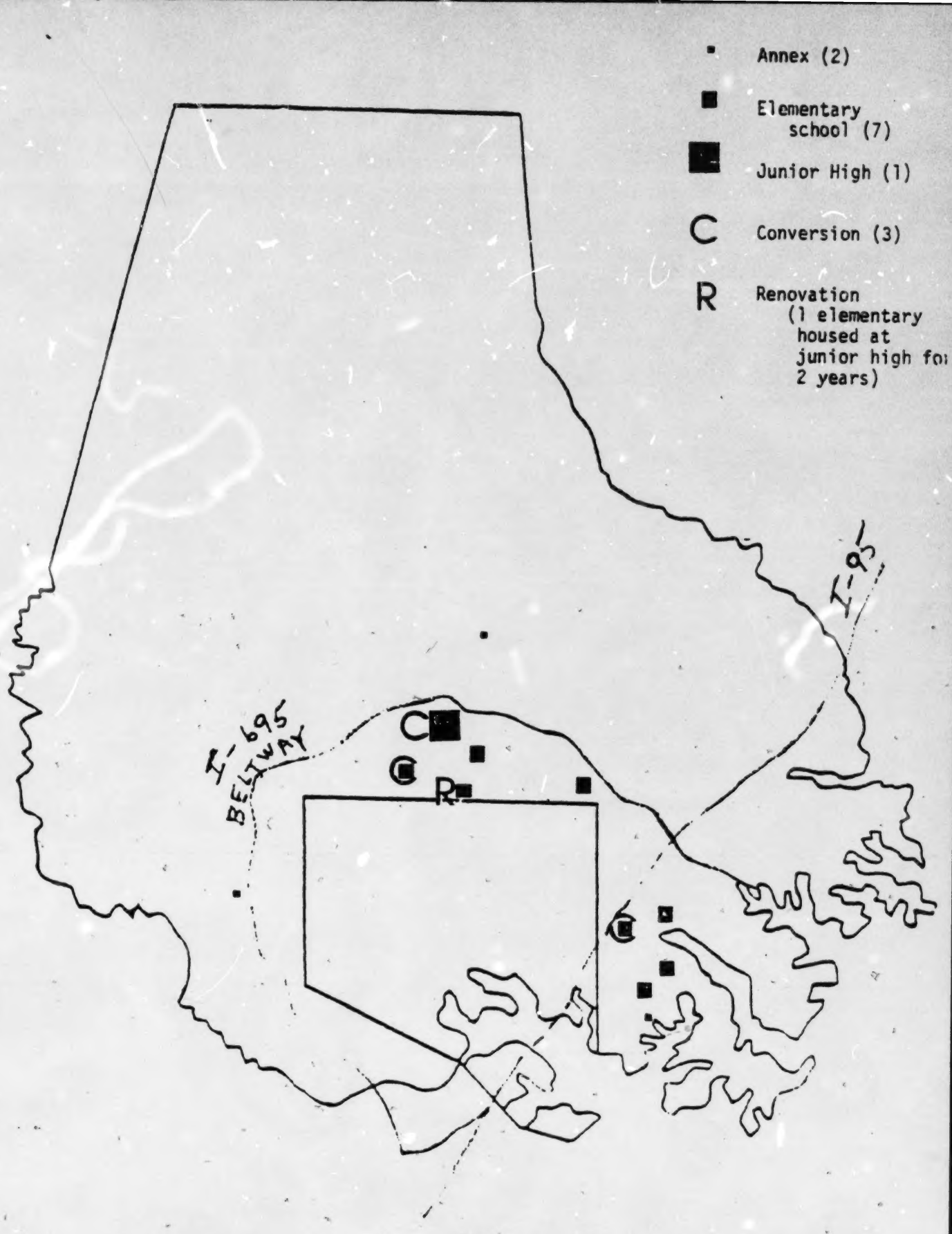
The number of pupils in U.S. schools

is expected to fall by 13%



DECLINING ENROLLMENT in MARYLAND


BALTIMORE COUNTY
MARYLAND
School Year 1979-80
DECLINE of 4.4%
Period 1971-79
DECLINE of 22½ %


Annex (2)
Elementary school (7)
Junior High (1)
C Conversion (3)
R Renovation (1 elementary housed at junior high for 2 years)
I-95
I-695 BELTWAY
C
C
R
C

Towson Elem.

(old, 3 story, substantial structure, limited parking

in heart of County seat)

senior citizen center, community mental-health center,

nursery school, parks & recreation center, programs by YMCA

Parkville Elem.

(old, 4 story 30+ rooms)

senior citizen center, Election Supervisors hdqtrs.,

parks & recreation center, other community ser.

Merritt Point Elem. (1 story, 24 classroom)

Police Athletic League activities, Dept. of Social Services, Cerebral Palsy Foundation, community mental-health center, other community ser.

Inverness Elem. (1 level, 24 room)

store ½ county's voting machines,

rec center, HRDA & community services

Gray Manor Elem.

(2 story, multi-wing 24 room, vandalized)

proposed 225-bed private nursing home

MAJOR REASONS FOR DECLINING SCHOOL ENROLLMENT -

1 Reduced birthrate

2 Uncertainty over economic conditions

3 Increased number of working & professional women

4 Rising incidence of unmarried couples living together

5 Exodus of Americans from core cities to suburbia

ADMINISTRATORS POSITION

Their training & experience

has been in responding to growth.

The problems of declining enrollment

are not easily explained to the public.

Cost of education is rising

while pupil confidence in its methods is failing.

No information has been generated

on national level to determine best method

of dealing with enrollment decline.